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SUBJECT: EU MISSION IN GUINEA-BISSAU: MANDATE RENEWAL
EXPECTED

LISBON 00000068 001.3 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Since 2008, an EU mission in Guinea-Bissau (GB) has been playing an important role in reform of the military and the security and justice sectors. Despite initial challenges due to political instability and resistance from the GB military, the low-budget advisory mission has made progress with the passage of key reform legislation. Its original one-year mandate, extended until May 31, 2010, is expected to be renewed for another year pending approval of further legislation by the GB government and an understanding with the UN to improve coordination. The Portuguese have invested significant political capital in the mission, and would welcome greater participation by other EU member states, the U.S., and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). End Summary.

COMPOSITION OF MISSION

¶2. (SBU) The EU Mission in Support of Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau (EU SSR Guinea-Bissau), headed by Spanish General Juan Esteban Verastegui, is currently composed of 13 advisors (eight of them Portuguese) and half a dozen support staff, including logistics and security officers. According to Luis Leandro da Silva, Head of European Security and Defense Policy at the Portuguese MFA, Portugal has invested significant political capital in the mission and has a natural interest in promoting it and ensuring its success. He stressed, however, that Portugal would like more diverse participation. Noting that there have been few candidates from other countries, he welcomed greater participation by other EU member states, the U.S., and third countries, particularly from CPLP, but recognized that financial constraints often limit participation.

MANDATE RENEWAL

¶3. (SBU) The mission was established in 2008 under a one-year mandate until April 2009, and extended until May 31, 2010 by two six-month extensions. According to da Silva, the mission has a three-fold mandate -- to reform the military and the security and justice sectors. The EU Political and Security Commission has reached consensus to renew the mission under a new one-year mandate (June 1, 2010 - May 31, 2011) with a greater focus on implementation of security reforms. The decision, which has yet to be formally adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council, would be conditioned on (1) approval of further legislation by the GB government prior to the end of

the current mandate, and (2) an understanding, possibly in the form of an MOU, between the EU mission and the UN to improve coordination and division of labor.

PROGRESS TO DATE

14. (SBU) Da Silva said that while the mission is a low-budget (6 million euros) advisory operation, it has had a positive impact in Guinea-Bissau, attaining results despite a difficult, politically unstable environment, exacerbated by the March 2009 assassinations of the president and military chief of staff. Da Silva acknowledged that initially the mission faced challenges due to political instability, which made it difficult for the GB government to focus on enacting reform legislation. He noted that there was also some initial mistrust on the part of GB authorities and resistance from the military to the proposed reforms, which would necessarily involve downsizing and restructuring the military. Nevertheless, da Silva insisted, the mission made progress toward bringing civilian rule to the security sector. The GB government approved reform of the police force and is working toward creating a structure similar to the paramilitary Portuguese National Guard and civilian police.

15. (SBU) According to da Silva, the work of the mission is fundamental to the political process and stability of Guinea-Bissau. He warned that without reform of the military or police force, there would continue to be excessive interference by the military and security forces in the political process. He characterized the EU mission as the "most credible mission" on security reform, but acknowledged that the UN also plays an important role in Guinea-Bissau. Da Silva credited the EU mission for highlighting the need

LISBON 00000068 002.3 OF 002

for security reform, eliciting commitment from GB authorities, mobilizing UN actors, and generating interest in security reform within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The UN is in the process of consolidating the operations of its various offices in Guinea-Bissau into a centralized office, which will be designated the UN Integrated Office in Guinea-Bissau and staffed by approximately 100 people.

COMMENT

16. (SBU) The Portuguese would welcome U.S. participation in this mission. With the anticipated one-year mandate renewal, the U.S. could fulfill an important advisory role in support of ongoing reform efforts in Guinea-Bissau, furthering our bilateral relationships with both Portugal and its former colony. A U.S. offer to provide an advisor to the GB justice sector remains outstanding in Washington, though we understand it has received favorable consideration. Embassy Lisbon recommends that Department seek to resolve the delay in the U.S. decision to participate in the EU mission in Guinea-Bissau in anticipation of a new one-year mandate beginning in June. Guinea-Bissau is the textbook example of a failed state, yet a modest U.S. investment would show that we care and support a strong ally in its efforts to make a difference.

For more reporting from Embassy Lisbon and information about Portugal, please see our Intelink site:

<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/portal:portugal>
BALLARD